

December 7, 2022

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-74-22

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to inform counties that Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and California State Supplementary Payment (SSP) recipients will receive a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) effective January 1, 2023 and that, per federal regulations, the new SSI and SSP monthly payment amounts reflecting the COLAs must be acted on for CalFresh purposes no later than the March 2023 benefit allotment for all cases where SSI/SSP payment amount data is readily available.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

December 7, 2022

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-74-22

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY
TO KIDS (CALWORKS) PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY REFUGEE PROGRAM COORDINATORS
ALL CONSORTIUM PROJECT MANAGERS
ALL QUALITY CONTROL SUPERVISORS

SUBJECT: CALFRESH ANNUAL SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT FOR SUPPLEMENTAL
SECURITY INCOME (SSI) RECIPIENTS - EFFECTIVE
JANUARY 1, 2023

REFERENCE: [ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE \(ACIN\) I-11-22](#); [ACIN I-87-20](#); [7 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS \(CFR\) 273.12\(e\)\(3\)](#); [7 CFR 273.9\(c\)\(8\)](#); [7 CFR 273.2\(f\)\(9\)\(iii\)](#); [7 CFR 273.9\(b\)\(5\)\(i\)](#); [7 CFR 273.2\(k\)\(1\)\(iii\)\(A\)](#); [7 CFR 273.11\(k\)](#); [ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 19-44](#); [FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE \(FNS\) 310 HANDBOOK SECTION 741.4](#)

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to inform counties that Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and California State Supplementary Payment (SSP) recipients will receive an 8.7% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) effective January 1, 2023. Per [Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 273.12\(e\)\(3\)](#) the COLAs must be acted on for CalFresh purposes no later than the March 2023 benefit allotment for all cases where SSI/SSP payment amount data is readily available. The Supplemental Nutrition Benefit (SNB) and Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) cases will not be negatively affected by this change.

This ACIN provides counties with information on the extent that the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) will automate the 2023 SSI/SSP COLA and county responsibility for cases not included in the automation effort.

BACKGROUND

Currently, the Social Security Administration (SSA) makes updated State Data Exchange (SDX) file information available to all states on a monthly basis. Certain elements of the SDX file, including individual SSI/SSP monthly payment amounts, are made available to County Welfare Departments (CWDs) via the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS).

On January 1 of each year, all SSI and SSP recipients are subject to a change in monthly payment amounts as a result of the annual SSA COLA and California State budget, respectively. Updated SSI/SSP monthly payment amounts are sent to states via the SDX.

Updated SDX information is typically available to administrators in January of each year. SDX information about SSI/SSP monthly payment amounts, which reflect the COLA, is considered verified upon receipt and must be used to adjust CalFresh household budgets and monthly benefit allotments no later than the March benefit allotment of each year. CWDs cannot accurately apply a percentage-based COLA to existing SSI/SSP payment information available in the SAWS because of the varying impacts of the SSA COLA on the SSI/SSP monthly payment amount and the number of SSI/SSP recipients receiving a non-standard SSI/SSP monthly payment amount. States must make mass changes to reflect COLAs for benefits where information on COLAs are readily available in accordance with [7 CFR 273.12\(e\)\(3\)](#).

[All County Information Notice \(ACIN\) I-11-22](#), released on January 28, 2022, provides information on the 2022 SSI/SSP COLA automation. The SAWS will continue to automatically implement this change in 2023 for the majority of SSI/SSP CalFresh recipients. In order to do so accurately, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and the SAWS have updated the annual data match between the SAWS and MEDS to retrieve and update the post-COLA SSI/SSP monthly payment amounts for CalFresh recipients.

ONGOING CALFRESH HOUSEHOLDS

For ongoing CalFresh households, the SAWS will generate a point-in-time list of individuals receiving CalFresh who have an SSI/SSP payment on record. The list will be sent to DHCS, which will perform a data match to produce a file with updated SSI/SSP payment amounts (the SSI-ELIG-AMT, SSI-PAID-AMT, SSP-ELIG-AMT and SSP-PAID-AMT) for each CalFresh recipient. The SAWS will first compare the recipient's SSI/SSP PAID and ELIGIBLE amounts, then update the income data record with the ELIGIBLE amount if it is less than or equal to the PAID amount. This will ensure that retroactive payments are not included in the CalFresh budget as retroactive lump-sum payments are excluded as income in accordance with [7 CFR 273.9\(c\)\(8\)](#).

The SAWS will automatically include the updated SSI/SSP monthly payment amount in the household budget and, if applicable, adjust the monthly benefit amount effective the January benefit allotment. A list of individuals that are unmatched or identified with a PAID amount less than the ELIGIBLE amount will be sent to counties for manual updating (see Cases Not Captured in the Data Match section below). Proper noticing is required when acting on the new SSI/SSP monthly payment amount. The SAWS will automatically issue no change, reduced benefit, or discontinuance notices for all affected households in accordance with [7 CFR 273.12\(e\)\(3\)](#) and [7 CFR 273.2\(f\)\(9\)\(iii\)](#). Please note that ongoing Transitional CalFresh (TCF) cases containing SSI/SSP recipients will be included in the match but the new SSI/SSP amounts will not be used in the CalFresh budget until the TCF period ends.

CASES NOT CAPTURED IN THE DATA MATCH

Per [7 CFR 273.12\(e\)\(3\)](#), states are required to make mass changes to reflect COLAs in benefits, where information is readily available. Not all CalFresh recipients who are also SSI/SSP recipients will be captured in the data match. For example, SSI/SSP recipients that cannot be confidently matched because of differences between the SDX and SAWS data will not be captured. Additionally, any SSI/SSP recipient whose PAID amount is less than the ELIGIBLE amount will not be included because an SSI recoupment may be present. In these scenarios, CWDs must manually update the SSI/SSP monthly payment amount as soon as possible and no later than the individual's next periodic report or recertification.

SSI/SSP RECOUPMENTS

As mentioned above, CWDs will receive a list of recipients that the PAID amount is less than the ELIGIBLE amount indicating a possible SSI/SSP recoupment. CWDs must explore the reason for the recoupment and take actions accordingly. As a reminder, only certain SSI/SSP recoupments are excluded for CalFresh purposes. Per [7 CFR 273.9\(b\)\(5\)\(i\)](#), recoupment amounts are excluded as income for SSI/SSP households which result from SSI/SSP overpayments. CWDs must use the ELIGIBLE amount (SSI-ELIG-AMT/ SSP-ELIG-AMT) for recoupments resulting from any other reason than an SSI/SSP overpayment, in accordance with [7 CFR 273.11\(k\)](#). County workers should carefully check all SSI/SSP amounts at the next periodic report or recertification for the presence a non-SSI overpayment recoupment and adjust the SSI monthly income accordingly. If an SSI recoupment is present, the CWD may need to request the SSA award letter to determine the origin of the recoupment.

OVERISSUANCES (OI)

CWDs are reminded that not all benefit discrepancies will result in an OI claim. Please refer to [ACIN I-87-20](#), released on November 19, 2020, for OI instructions.

NEW APPLICANTS

Individuals who are approved for CalFresh, including Transitional CalFresh, after January 1 will not be included in the data match and will be considered “New Applicants”. As is current policy for new CalFresh applicants, CWDs must verify any earned or unearned income available to the household, including each SSI/SSP recipient’s monthly payment amount. Per [7 CFR 273.2\(k\)\(1\)\(iii\)\(A\)](#), SSI/SSP monthly payment amounts may be verified through the SDX, Beneficiary Data Exchange (BENDEX), and/or through verification provided by the household. For further guidance on verifying the SSI/SSP monthly payment amount, refer to [All County Letter No. 19-44](#), released on May 9th, 2019. The SDX file information available in MEDS will reflect the SSA COLA effective January 1, 2023.

QUALITY CONTROL IMPACT

Per [7 CFR 273.12\(e\)\(3\)](#) and [FNS 310 Handbook Section 741.4](#), Social Security and Other Federal Mass Changes, State agencies are required to implement a state initiated mass change when information about the mass change is readily available, including the SSA COLA.

Once the SSA COLA is implemented, counties are required to act on the new SSI/SSP monthly payment amount no later than March 1 of each year for all continuing cases based on readily available data. Cases which result in an inaccurate or untimely action may result in a variance or a QC finding.

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact the CalFresh Policy and Employment Bureau at CalFreshPolicy@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

ANDREA BRAYBOY, Chief
CalFresh and Nutrition Branch
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division